

HOW IMPORTANT IS THE BIBLE TO AMERICA'S SURVIVAL?

Dave Miller, Ph.D

There was a time in American civilization when the Bible was integral to every aspect of life. It was revered in the home. It was taught and used in the schools. It was incorporated into our laws and integrated into our courts of justice. It was quoted by politicians, judges, educators, and even entertainers. It permeated the great literature of Western Civilization. But with the multitude of attacks on the integrity, inspiration, and inerrancy of the Bible over the last century, respect for the Bible has waned significantly. Particularly after World War II, confidence in the Bible as the divine Word of God has been seriously undermined in America. Amazingly, a recent poll still shows the Bible to be the all-time favorite book for American adults: "Researchers said it's rare to find such consensus among Americans, regardless of gender, education level, geographic location, race/ethnicity or age" (Hamm, 2008).

THE BIBLE'S CLAIM

How important is belief in the Bible to the survival of any nation? The Bible speaks directly to this point: it is absolutely critical to both personal and private life, as well as national life. Consider these few biblical declarations:

Surely I have taught you statutes and judgments, just as the Lord my God

commanded me, that you should act according to them in the land which you go to possess. Therefore be careful to observe them; for **this is your wisdom and your understanding** in the sight of the peoples who will hear all these statutes, and say, "Surely this great nation is a wise and understanding people." For what great nation is there that has God so near to it, as the Lord our God is to us, for whatever reason we may call upon Him? And what great nation is there that has **such statutes and righteous judgments as are in all this law** which I set before you this day?... You shall therefore keep His statutes and His commandments which I command you today, **that it may go well with you and with your children after you, and that you may prolong your days in the land** (Deuteronomy 4:5-8,40, emp. added; cf. 5:33; 6:2-3,18).

Set your hearts on all the words which I testify among you today, which you shall command your children to be careful to observe—all the words of this law. For it is not a futile thing for you, because **it is your life**, and by this word **you shall prolong your days in the land** (Deuteronomy 32:46-47, emp. added).

The instant I speak concerning a nation and concerning a kingdom, to pluck up, to pull down, and to destroy it, **if that nation against whom I have spoken turns from**

its evil, I will relent of the disaster that I thought to bring upon it. And the instant I speak concerning a nation and concerning a kingdom, to build and to plant it, **if it does evil in My sight so that it does not obey My voice, then I will relent concerning the good with which I said I would benefit it** (Jeremiah 18:7-10, emp. added).

I will never forget Your precepts, **for by them You have given me life.** Oh, how I love Your law! It is my meditation all the day. You, through Your commandments, **make me wiser than my enemies;** for they are ever

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with me. I understand more than the ancients, because I keep Your precepts. How sweet are Your words to my taste, sweeter than honey to my mouth! Through Your precepts **I get understanding; therefore I hate every false way.** Your word is a lamp to my feet and a light to my path (Psalm 119:93,97-98,100,103-105, emp. added).

For **the word of God is living and powerful**, and sharper than any two-edged sword, piercing even to the division of soul and spirit, and of joints and marrow, and is **a discerner of the thoughts and intents of the heart** (Hebrews 4:12, emp. added). If you **abide in My word**, you are My disciples indeed. And you shall know the truth, and **the truth shall make you free....** He who rejects Me, and does not receive My words, has that which judges him—**the word that I have spoken will judge him in the last day....** Sanctify them by Your truth. **Your word is truth** (John 8:31-32; 12:48; 17:17, emp. added).

This means that the Bible is the most important book on the planet, in a class by itself, surpassing all others. Indeed, whereas all other books are the word of men, the Bible is the Word of God.

THE FOUNDERS' CLAIM

How important was the Bible in the minds of the architects of American civilization? History is decisive on this point as well: the Founders viewed the Bible as absolutely indispensable and integral to the survival of the Republic. It is no wonder that, after a decade-long study in an effort to identify where the Founders acquired their ideas for the formation of the nation and the writing of its constitutions of government, political scientists conducting the study concluded that the Founders cited the Bible in their political utterances far more often than any other source (see Lutz, 1988, pp. 140-141).

Indeed, we live in a time warp far removed from America's origins. The Founders clearly believed that the initial founding and the future survival of the Republic were both heavily, if not exclusively, dependent on the successful diffusion of the Bible throughout society. In fact, the Framers of the first state constitution of Massachusetts emphasized that very point in its third article:

Article III. [As the happiness of a people, and the good order and pres-

ervation of civil government, essentially **depend upon piety, religion and morality; and as these cannot be generally diffused through a community, but by the institution of the public worship of God, and of public instructions in piety, religion and morality:** Therefore, to promote their happiness and to secure the good order and preservation of their government, the people of this commonwealth have a right to invest their legislature with power to authorize and require, and the legislature shall, from time to time, authorize and require, the several towns, parishes, precincts, and other bodies politic, or religious societies, to make suitable provision, at their own expense, for the institution of the public worship of God, and for the support and maintenance of... **teachers of piety, religion and morality**, in all cases where such provision shall not be made voluntarily (*Constitution of the...*, emp. added).

The Framers of the Massachusetts constitution believed that "public instructions in piety, religion and morality" could come only from the Bible.

The Continental Congress considered the Bible so important to national life that they actually passed resolutions to make certain that Bibles were in abundance in the country. The Continental Congress directed a committee to investigate ways by which Bibles could be secured. The committee made its report on September 11, 1777, stating "that **the use of the Bible is so universal, and its importance so great...** your Committee recommend [sic] that Congress will order the Committee of Commerce to import 20,000 Bibles from Holland, Scotland, or elsewhere, into the different parts of the states in the Union." Congress promptly ordered the importation (*Journals of...*, 1907, 8:734-745, emp. added). Four years later, as the colonies suffered from the effects of the British embargo, and as the shortage of Bibles continued, importation became sufficiently impractical that Congress was again petitioned for approval, this time to print Bibles in America, rather than to import them from outside the

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country. The request was approved and upon completion of the printing, on Thursday, September 12, 1782, the full Congress not only approved the edition, but gave permission for their endorsement to be placed in the front of the Bible! It read: "Whereupon, Resolved, That the United States in Congress assembled...recommend this edition of the Bible to the inhabitants of the United States" (*Journals of...*, 1914, 23:574). Who today would believe that the members of the original Congress of the United States considered the Bible so important to national existence that they would expend effort—even in wartime—to make certain that Bibles were available to the American population? The present widespread loss of respect for and interest in the Bible, is disgraceful, and if continued, will spell our national doom.

Numerous Founders gave eloquent testimony to the critical importance of the Bible to America. For example, *Constitution* signer and Secretary of

War under the first two Presidents, James McHenry, insisted:

The Holy Scriptures...can **alone** secure to society, order and peace, and to our courts of justice and constitutions of government, purity, stability, and usefulness. In vain, **without the Bible**, we increase penal

laws and draw entrenchments around our institutions. **Bibles are strong entrenchments. Where they abound, men cannot pursue wicked courses** (as quoted in Steiner, 1921, p. 14, emp. added).

Patrick Henry believed that the Bible is "a book worth more than all the other

books that were ever printed" (as quoted in Wirt, 1818, p. 402). The first Chief Justice of the U.S. Supreme Court (1789-1795), John Jay, wrote to Peter Jay on April 8, 1784: "The Bible is the best of all books, for it is the word of God and teaches us the way to be happy in this world and in

the next. Continue therefore to read it and to **regulate your life by its precepts**" (1980, 2:709, emp. added).

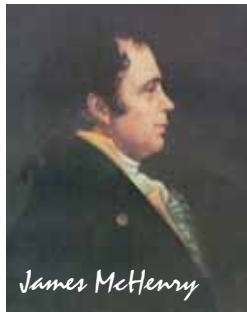
One of the Fathers of American jurisprudence, Joseph Story, called the

Bible "the common inheritance, not merely of Christendom, but of the world" (1854, p. 259). In his *The Age of Revelation* (a devastating response to Thomas Paine's *The Age of Reason*), Elias Boudinot declared:

[W]ere you to ask me to recommend **the most valuable book in the world**, I should fix on the Bible as the most instructive, both to the wise and the ignorant. Were you to ask me for one, affording the most rational and pleasing entertainment to the inquiring mind, I should

repeat, it is the Bible: and should you renew the inquiry, for the best philosophy, or the most interesting history, I should still urge you to look into your Bible. I would make it, in short, **the Alpha and Omega of knowledge**; And be assured, that it is for want of understanding the scriptures, both of the Old and New Testament, that so little value is set upon them by the world at large (1801, p. xv, emp. added).

Noah Webster asserted: "[C]itizens should early understand that the genuine source of correct republican principles is the Bible, particularly the New Testament, or the Christian reli-



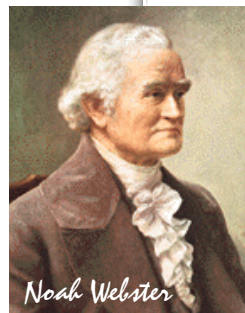
James McHenry



Patrick Henry



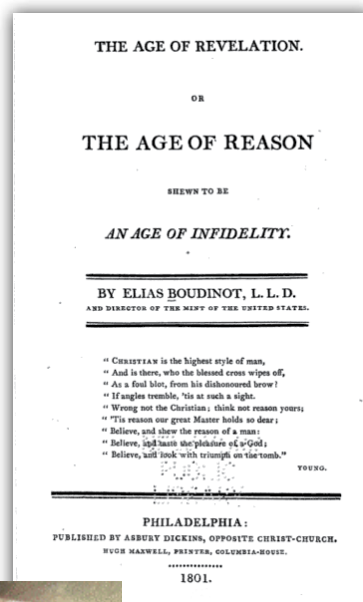
John Jay



Noah Webster

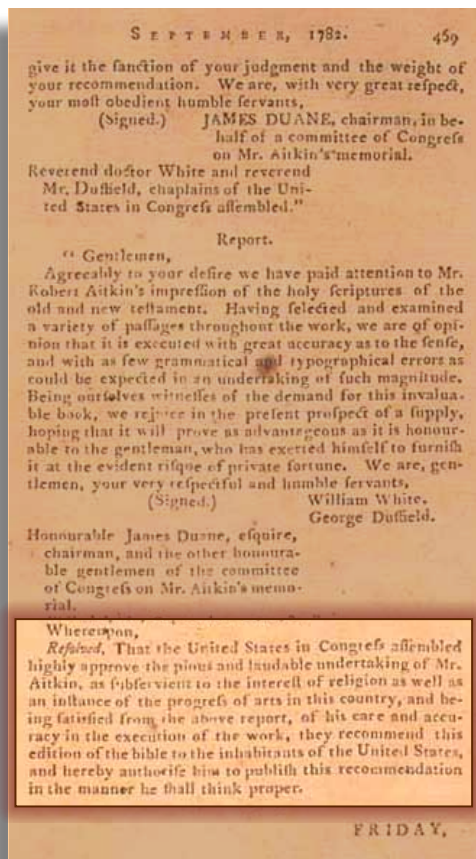


Elias Boudinot



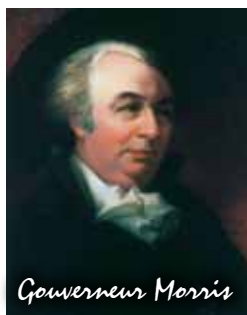
gion" (1832, p. 6). Webster also insisted that "[t]he Bible is the chief moral cause of all that is good and the best corrector

of all that is evil in human society; the best book for regulating the temporal concerns of men" (1833, p. v). He further claimed: "All the miseries and evils which men suffer from vice, crime, ambition, injustice, oppression, slavery and war, proceed from their despising or neglecting the precepts



contained in the Bible" (1832, p. 339). Who today believes these statements? According to this prominent Founding Father, the Bible is responsible for our Republic, our civil liberty, our constitutions of government, and for correcting and regulating human behavior. Yet, we have banned the Bible from public schools, we allow college professors to impugn its inspiration and integrity, and we disallow its use in jury deliberation rooms (*People v. Harlan*, 2005).

Constitution signer, Gouverneur Morris, observed: "The reflection and experience of many years have led me to consider the holy writings not only as the most authentic and instructive in themselves, but as the clue to all



Gouverneur Morris

other history. They tell us what man is, and they alone tell us why he is what he is" (1821, p. 30). *Declaration of Independence* signer, Dr. Benjamin Rush, declared that the Bible

"should be read in our schools in preference to all other books from its containing the greatest portion of that kind of knowledge which is calculated to produce private and public temporal happiness" (1798, p. 100, emp. added). Signer of the *Declaration* and second President of the United States, John Adams, wrote in his diary on February 22, 1756: "Suppose a nation in some distant region should take the Bible for

their only law book and every member should regulate his conduct by the precepts there exhibited....

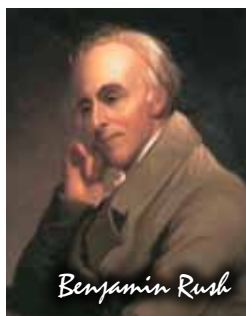


John Adams

What a Eutopia, what a Paradise would this region be" (1854, 2:6-7, emp. added). In a letter to Thomas Jefferson on December 25, 1813, John Adams stated that "the Bible is the best Book in the world" (1856, 10:85). Robert

Winthrop, who was Speaker of the House in the 1840s, explained: "Men, in a word, must necessarily be controlled either by a power within them or by a power without them; either by **the Word of God** or by the strong arm of man; either by **the Bible** or by the bayonet" (1852, p. 172, emp. added).

Another telling indication of the Founders' attachment to the Bible is seen in their affiliations with Bible societies that were formed to facilitate the distribution of Bibles throughout the country. "A list of Bible society founders reads like a 'Who's Who' of the early Republic" ("Our Story," n.d.). Founded in New York City in 1816, the American Bible Society provided Bibles to the U.S. military in the 1817 provision of Bibles for the U.S. Navy, and produced its first translation of the Bible in 1818 in a Native American language ("Fact Sheet...", 2008). The founder and first president of the American Bible Society was Elias Boudinot, one-time President of the Continental Congress. The first vice-president of the Society was the first Chief Justice of the U.S. Supreme Court, John Jay, who became the Society's president on the death of Boudinot. Other Founders who were



Benjamin Rush

members and/or officers of the American Bible Society included:

James Brown (Revolutionary War soldier; Minister to France; U.S. Senator)

DeWitt Clinton (U.S. Senator; Mayor of New York City; Governor of New York)

Jonas Galusha (Revolutionary War soldier; Vermont State Supreme Court justice and Governor)

William Gaston (U.S. Congressman; North Carolina State Supreme Court justice)

Charles Goldsborough (U.S. House member; Governor of Maryland)

William Gray (Revolutionary War soldier; *Constitution* ratification Massachusetts convention delegate)

Felix Grundy (U.S. House member; U.S. Senator)

William Jones (Revolutionary War soldier; Governor of Rhode Island)

Andrew Kirkpatrick (New Jersey House Member; New Jersey Supreme Court Chief Justice)

Rufus King (Revolutionary War soldier; Signer of federal *Constitution*; U.S. Senator)

John Langdon (Delegate to Continental Congress; *Constitution* signer; U.S. Senator)

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Joseph Nourse (Military Secretary to General Charles Lee; Clerk/Paymaster for Board of War)

William Phillips (Lt. Governor of Massachusetts; State Senator)

The FANG Argument: A Refutation

Kyle Butt, M.A.

Renowned atheist Dan Barker is the co-president of the Freedom From Religion Foundation. He writes prolifically defending atheism, and often attacks the God of the Bible. One argument that he claims proves that God does not exist, he calls FANG. The letters in FANG stand for Freewill Argument for the Nonexistence of God. To summarize this argument, Barker claims that a being can be defined as personal only if it has free will. He then claims that God cannot have free will because, he asserts, “Free will, if it exists, requires that you not know the future” (2008, p. 127). He further states:

However, if you are omniscient, you already know all your future choices and you are not free to change what you know in advance. You cannot make decisions. You do not have a period of uncertainty and flexibility before selecting. You do not have free will. If you do change what you thought you knew in advance, exercising the prerogative of omnipotence, then you were not omniscient in the first place. You can't have both free will and omniscience. If God is defined as having free will and knowing the future, then God does not exist (2008, pp. 127-128).

Barker's FANG argument has several problems. First, he has extreme difficulty maintaining that a personal being must have free will, because he does not believe humans have free will. Barker's atheistic evolutionary assumptions force him to believe that humans are products of nature that do not possess independent minds capable of truly making any choice that is not directed by genes and nature. In his debate with Peter Payne, Barker stated: "I happen to think that we have the illusion of freewill.... I'm a strict determinist. We are natural creatures. The material world is all there is. We actually don't have what we would call libertarian freewill" (Barker and Payne, 2005). If humans do not have free will, then they cannot be personal beings. Knowing the absurdity of this conclusion, Barker must somehow change the definition of free will to allow humans to be personal

beings and still be completely controlled by their alleged naturalistic origins.

How does Barker accomplish this? He simply changes the definition of free will. He states: "I am a determinist, which means that I don't think complete libertarian free will exists. Since we don't know the future...we have the illusion of free will, which to me is what 'free will' actually means" (2008, p. 128, *italics in orig.*). Notice the devious switch in which having the illusion of something now means that a person actually has it. Suppose that we used this type of thinking in the real world. A man is in the desert dying of thirst and sees a mirage in which he has the illusion that he is drinking a tall glass of water. Does he actually have the water because he has the illusion of it? Certainly not. Will the illusion of the water save him from dying of thirst? No. He is still dying of thirst. Having the illusion of that water is not the same as having the water. In different situations, indeed, the illusion of water is not the same as the illusion of water. Barker's FANG argument for free will is incoherent. Barker's argument is incoherent. Barker must have free will, but he is not free. Free beings despite their lack of free will.

There are other reasons why FANG is false. Remember that, according to Barker, “Free will, if it exists, requires that you not know the future.” This statement, however, is simply an assertion, with no factual or logical backing. Who says that free will requires that you not know the future? Is there a logical syllogism that Barker has produced that proves the statement to be true? No, there is not. Dan merely tosses the statement out there, sounding very confident in his assertion, expecting the listener or reader to accept what he says, but he does not prove the validity of his major premise. A mere assertion proves nothing.

In fact, free will does not require that a person be ignorant of the future. Could a person know what would happen in the future, have the ability and power to change it, but still choose what he knew would happen? Yes. The life of Jesus Christ gives a perfect case in point. In Isaiah 53:9, the Bible says

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that the Messiah would not lie. This prophecy was written about 700 years before Jesus walked the Earth. According to Dan, that must mean that since God knew that Jesus (God in the flesh) would not lie, then Jesus did not have the ability or choice to lie. Yet, when we look to the New Testament, we see that Jesus was tempted in all ways like other humans are (Hebrews 4:15), but He did not sin. Did Jesus have the ability to lie? Yes. Did He have the opportunity to lie every day of His life on Earth? Yes. But did Jesus know that He would not lie? Yes. We see, then, that foreknowledge of an event does not rob a person of the ability to change the event. It is not that God, by knowing His future actions, cannot change them. It is simply that He does not choose to change them.

At this point in the discussion, the atheist might raise an objection. He might say that using the biblical example of Jesus to reinforce the fact that free will does not require ignorance of the future is unacceptable, since the atheist does not acknowledge that the Bible is God's Word. This objection is plagued by a serious problem. Where did the idea originate that God is omnipotent and omniscient? The atheist has used the Bible's description of God to construct the FANG argument. If the Bible was used to construct the "problem," how could a person object to using the Bible to solve the problem? In reality, the skeptic often wants to use the Bible when it is convenient, but reject the Bible when the text clears up an alleged contradiction. One of the primary purposes of the Bible is to show the consistency of God's characteristics. To say that God has qualities (derived from the Bible) that are inconsistent, and then to completely ignore His explanation that reconciles them, is dishonest.

Furthermore, even if a person were to reject the factual validity of the prophecies and the life of Jesus, the example of Jesus would still provide a valid hypothetical situation that would disprove Barker's statement: "free will requires that you not know the future." Even if we were to say that, hypothetically, there was a person named Jesus who knew he would never lie, but had the opportunity and

ability to lie every day of His life, that would be sufficient to prove Barker's assertion false [NOTE: Just for the record, the historicity and deity of Christ has been established as fact, see Butt & Lyons, 2006.]

Additionally, the FANG argument fails because it equates the **knowledge** of the future with the **cause** of future events. Suppose a person knows that at 12:00 p.m. tomorrow he will choose to drink coffee instead of tea. At 12:00 p.m. the next day, he chooses coffee. What caused him to choose coffee? According to FANG, the cause of his choice must be his knowledge of the future. But, if you ask him what caused him to choose coffee, he might say that he hates tea, is allergic to tea, likes coffee better, etc. His **knowledge** of the fact that he would choose coffee did not force him to **choose** coffee, nor did it take from him the **ability to change** his mind. To further illustrate this fact, consider the idea of God's omnipresence in relation to the actions of humans. According to the biblical definition, used by Barker to form FANG, does God know all future actions of every human? Yes. So, God knew that you would be reading this information at this moment. Does God's advance knowledge **cause** a person's actions? No, because foreknowledge does not equal causality.

The FANG argument in no way accomplishes its stated purpose of disproving God's existence. It is incoherent based on Dan Barker's own concept of human free will. It is invalid because its basic foundational assumption is false: free will does not demand that a person be ignorant of the future. The FANG argument turns out to be nothing more than the False Assertion for the Nonexistence of God.

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 Butt, Kyle and Eric Lyons (2006), *Behold! The Lamb of God* (Montgomery, AL: Apologetics Press).



Charles C. Pinckney (Revolutionary War officer; Signer of federal *Constitution*)

Thomas Posey (Revolutionary War officer; State and U.S. Senator)

Isaac Shelby (Revolutionary War officer; first Governor of Kentucky)

John Cotton Smith (U.S. House member; Connecticut Supreme Court Judge and Governor)

Caleb Strong (Constitutional Convention delegate; U.S. Senator; Governor of Massachusetts)

Smith Thompson (New York State Supreme Court Chief Justice; U.S. Supreme Court justice)

William Tilghman (Federal *Constitution* ratification delegate; Pennsylvania Supreme Court Chief Justice)

Daniel Tompkins (New York State Supreme Court justice; Vice-President under James Monroe)

Robert Troup (Revolutionary War Lieutenant-Colonel; New York U.S. District Court judge)

Peter Vroom (New Jersey Governor; U.S. House; State Supreme Court Chief Justice)

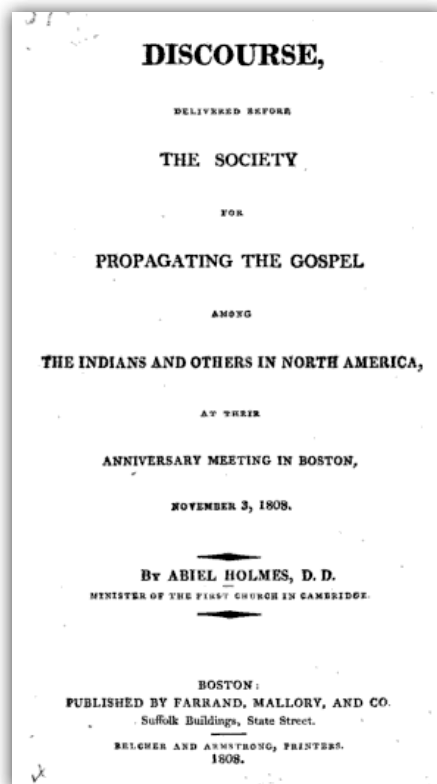
Bushrod Washington (Revolutionary War soldier; *Constitution* ratification Virginia delegate)

William Wirt (Virginia State House member; U.S. Attorney; U.S. Attorney-General under Monroe)

Thomas Worthington (Ohio state constitutional convention delegate; U.S. Senator; Governor)

Still other Founders were associated with various Bible societies. Revolutionary War soldier and Governor of New Jersey, Joseph Bloomfield, was a member of the New Jersey Bible Society. Revolutionary War officer and Governor of Massachusetts, John Brooks, served as president of the Middlesex County Bible Society. Chief Justice of the Rhode Island Supreme Court and U.S. Senator, James Burrell, Jr., served as president of the Providence Auxiliary Bible Society. James McHenry, Secretary of War and signer of the federal *Constitution*, was a founder and president of the Baltimore Bible Society. Rufus Putnam, Revolutionary War Brigadier-General as well as Surveyor-General under Presidents Washington, Adams, and Jefferson, served as president of the Ohio Bible Society. *Declaration* signer and Surgeon-General of the Continental Army, Benjamin Rush, served as founder and vice-president of the Philadelphia Bible Society. These lists could be greatly expanded. [NOTE: see American Bible Society, 1816 and Barton, 2000, pp. 139-143, for lengthy listings.]

The following Founders were members of the Society for Propagating the Gospel Among the Indians and Others (see Holmes, 1808):



James Bowdoin (*Constitution* ratification delegate and Massachusetts Governor)

Francis Dana (Continental Congress member; *Constitution* ratification Massachusetts delegate)

Samuel Dexter (U.S. House; U.S. Senator; Secretary of War/Treasury/State under John Adams)

Benjamin Lincoln (Revolutionary War Major-General; Secretary of War)

John Lowell (Continental Congress member; Court of Appeals judge; U.S. federal judge)

William Phillips (Massachusetts Lieutenant Governor; state constitutional convention delegate)

James Sullivan (Massachusetts Supreme Court judge; elected to Continental Congress)

Increase Sumner (*Constitution* ratification Massachusetts delegate; State Supreme Court justice)

SPEAKING SCHEDULES

Kyle Butt

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May 6	Leeds, AL	(205) 699-2447

Dave Miller

April 3-5	Clarendon, TX	(806) 205-0181
April 10-12	Highland, CA	(909) 862-3678
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April 24-26	Iuka, MS	(662) 423-6891



INTOLERANT ATTACKS ON THE BIBLE

Yet, a full-scale, culture-wide assault on the Bible continues in America. Three plaques, with verses from the Psalms on them, posted at lookouts over the Grand Canyon were removed by the Department of Interior following threats by the ACLU, which claimed the verses were an illegal endorsement of religion by the government (“Scripture Yanked...,” 2003). A U.S. District Court judge ordered the removal of a Bible from a monument that sat in front of the Harris County courthouse in Houston, Texas for 50 years, on the grounds that it violated separation of church and state (“Remove Bible...,” 2003). The Colorado Supreme Court commuted the death penalty conviction of a man on death row (who had kidnapped, raped, and murdered a woman) on the grounds that one of the jurors used the Bible in the decision-making process (Johnson, 2005). The highest judicial figure in the state of Alabama was expelled from the court for his refusal to remove a Ten Commandments monument from the foyer of the judiciary (“Ten Commandments...,” 2003). And the insanity continues....

Indeed, the judiciary of America has been a primary perpetrator in the war on the Bible, as the U.S. Supreme Court banned the practice of requiring students in public schools to read Bible verses every morning (*Abington School District v. Schempp*, 1963), banned postings of the Ten Commandments in public school classrooms, since worship of God is included in them (*Stone v. Graham*, 1980), and banned teachers from sitting at their desks and silently reading the Bible in front of students during a classroom silent reading period (*Roberts v. Madigan*, 1990). And what of the incessant, ongoing assault in universities across America for the last 50 years, as professors have paraded before their students, steadily chipping away at the integrity of Bible. Such instances are legion. Founder and physician Benjamin Rush’s words, written

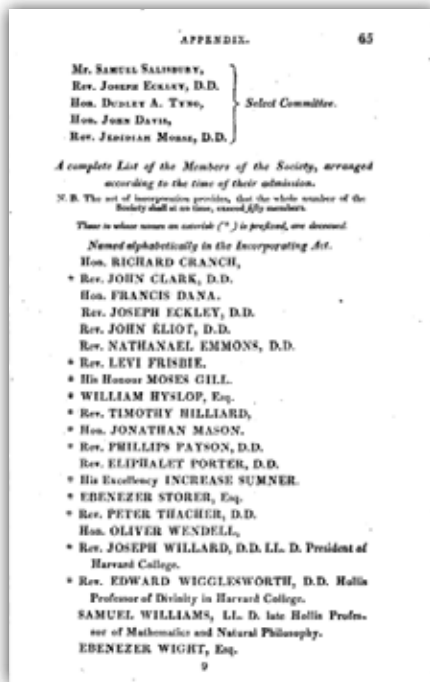
in 1789, could not be more relevant to our predicament: “The great enemy of the salvation of man, in my opinion, never invented a more effectual means of extirpating Christianity from the world than by persuading mankind that it was improper to read the Bible at schools” (1951, 1:521). This systematic cleansing of American culture in an effort to jettison the Bible from public life is absurd, demented, and utterly foolish.

THE OUTCOME

If the Bible is correct (and the Founders of American civilization believed it to be), the future of the Republic is inextricably linked with and inherently dependent on the extent to which Americans are willing to return to an intimate acquaintance with the Bible. In a speech delivered in Denver, Colorado in 1911, President Woodrow Wilson referred to the Bible as “the great charter of the human soul, as the ‘Magna Charta’ of the human soul” (Wilson and DiNunzio, 2006, p. 54). He insisted that “America was born a Christian nation. America was born to exemplify that devotion to the elements of righteousness which are derived **from the revelations of Holy Scripture**” and that Americans must “realize that part of **the destiny of America lies in their daily perusal of this great book of revelations**, that if they would see America free and pure they will make their own spirits free and pure by this baptism of the Holy Scripture” (p. 59, emp. added). The 30th President of the United States, Calvin Coolidge, warned: “The foundations of our society and our government rest so much on the teachings of the Bible that it would be difficult to support them if faith in these teachings would cease to be practically universal in our country” (as quoted in Thomas, 1996). Time will tell.

Words spoken by God to our predecessors who strayed from His Word are sobering:

My people are **destroyed for lack of knowledge**. Because you have



Such indications of the importance of the Bible to national health were typical of the mass of American Founders. Some Founders served as Christian chaplains in the Continental Army, including Abraham Baldwin, who signed the federal *Constitution* and served in both the U.S. House and Senate; Joel Barlow, who filled various foreign diplomatic roles; and Robert Treat Paine, a preacher who signed the *Declaration of Independence* and served as a Massachusetts Supreme Court judge.

Still another indication of the central place of the Bible among America’s Founders is seen in the fact that U.S. Presidents still follow the tradition, set at the very beginning of the Republic by the “Father of our country,” by placing their hand on a copy of the Bible while being sworn in as President (“Bibles and Scripture...”). History even records that immediately after taking the oath of office, George Washington leaned down and kissed the Bible (“Inaugurals of Presidents...”). The Bible has been so thoroughly part and parcel of American culture that a Bible is still included in most motel and hotel rooms across America.

rejected knowledge, I also will reject you...; because you have forgotten the law of your God, I also will forget your children. The more they increased, the more they sinned against Me; **I will change their glory into shame** (Hosea 4:6-7, emp. added). Awake to righteousness, and do not sin; for **some do not have the knowledge of God**. I speak this to **your shame** (1 Corinthians 15:34, emp. added).

We remove the Bible from public life to **our shame**—and at dire peril. May God bless us with a sufficient number of citizens, educators, preachers, and political leaders who will recall America from her shame. May God bless Americans with the will to return to the Bible in order to bask in the marvelous light of His glorious Word (1 Peter 2:9).

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NOTE FROM THE EDITOR

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THE BUTT/BARKER DEBATE

Of all the significant questions pertaining to human existence, none is more crucial than whether the God of the Bible exists. If He does exist, all human beings are obligated to come to a knowledge of His will and render obedience to Him. Those who fail to do so will face eternal punishment (2 Corinthians 5:10-11). If, on the other hand, the God of the Bible does not exist, behavior remains a matter of subjective, human inclination. Yet, the massive assault on traditional American values over the last half-century has taken its toll. Many Christians have been bullied into thinking that, perhaps, the theistic viewpoint cannot be given a credible, articulate defense in the face of the brash, overbearing onslaughts of atheism. But Jesus said: "You shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free" (John 8:32).

On Thursday evening, February 12, 2009, over 500 people pressed into the Russell House Ballroom on the campus of the University of South Carolina in Columbia to witness the verbal exchange between Dan Barker, avowed atheist, and A.P. staff member Kyle Butt, Christian theist. Reports of 250 additional people were turned away due to fire code regulations. Being in the Affirmative, Dan Barker had the responsibility to present proof that the God of the Bible does not exist. The format of the debate consisted of two 15-minute speeches, followed by two 10-minute speeches, followed by two

five-minute cross-examinations in which the debaters posed questions to each other. A 40-minute period ensued in which questions from the audience were directed in alternating fashion to each debater.

The debate was streamed live over the Internet to an audience estimated to have been in the thousands. After this initial effort to make the debate available to a wider audience, work on the production of a high-quality video of the debate quickly followed. That project has now been completed. We are pleased to announce the release of *The Butt-Barker Debate* on DVD. The approximate running time of the DVD of the debate is two hours, and is packaged in traditional DVD packaging, a sturdy plastic case with professional artwork. You will most certainly want to view this debate, and make copies available to friends, family, and co-workers who need to view it as well. We can know that the God of the Bible exists!

Dave Miller



See the Center Spread
for More Details

